William Wallace:

OR,

THE HIGHLAND HERO.

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON HISTORICAL FACTS.

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CHAPTER THE TENTH.

EDWARD, ſtung to the ſoul by his late repulſe, ordered his men to prepare themſelves for a march early next day-break, and ſignified his intention of making

for the little villages in Scotland, and there revenge himſelf for the defeat he had met with, by putting all the inhabitants to the ſword.

He wrote to all his barons in England, ordering them to meet him on the banks of the river Carron, with freſh ſupplies of men and ammunition.

The ſoldiers of Wallace were moſtly claſped in the arms of ſleep, when a man appeared out of breath at his couch. Our hero ſtarted up, and enquired the meaning of ſo untimely a viſit: the fellow made reply,

reply, that a youth, of the name of Douglas, was at that inſtant engaged in ſingle combat with his officer. Wallace was a profeſſed enemy to mutiny; ſo he ordered the rebellious young man to be brought before him. He had no ſooner pronounced his command, than Alexander, the officer, ſtaggered into his tent bleeding, and leaning on his ſword. "I come," cried he, "to demand juſtice on an "inſolent private who has dared to "lift his hand againſt me; and, "worſe than all, to croſs me in "my love."

"What could induce him to "commit ſo raſh an action?" cried our hero.

"I know not," anſwered Alexander; "only the villain interpoſed "in a love affair between myſelf "and a young woman."

"That was preſumption in-"deed," cried Wallace, "if he "had no intereſt in oppoſing your "ſchemes."

A guard was ordered to conduct young Douglas to the general's preſence.

ſence. The youth appeared trembling and timid.

" How comes it, young man," ſaid Wallace, frowning, " that, in " defiance to the law of armies, " you have raiſed your hand againſt " your ſuperior officer, which, by " the articles of war, condemns " you to *death*.—But I would wiſh " that juſtice ſhould be done to " every one. Have you received " any injury?"

" Call you it an injury," exclaimed the impaſſioned Douglas, " to ſeize the bluſhing, innocent

" virgin; oppreſs, and try to rob
" them of life's deareſt treaſures—
" peace and virtue?"

" Certainly," replied Wallace,
" it is the worſt of crimes."

" Then is your officer a cri-
" minal," continued Douglas, " and
" if his malice drags me to deſtruc-
" tion, I ſhall glory in my end; I
" ſhall periſh in the preſervation of
" a virtuous woman, and a tender
" wife."

Wallace, thinking this affair de-
ſerved inveſtigation, aſſured the
priſoner

priſoner juſtice ſhould be done him. Alexander turned to Wallace, and muttered out, " What, then, will " you encourage reptiles like theſe " in mutiny?"

" By no means," was the anſwer of our hero; " but, at the ſame " time, theſe *reptiles*, as you are " pleaſed to term them, have an " equal right to juſtice with your- " ſelf. If upon trial I find that " this young man is guilty, he " ſhall make you every fit atone- " ment; if you are wrong, the " wounds you have received muſt " be your puniſhment." The cap-

tain bit his lips, and tottered to a ſurgeon.

" Now, young man," ſaid Wallace, " you muſt give your reaſons " for this ſtrange conduct to your " officer; a conduct, which no- " thing but the moſt urgent cir- " cumſtances can juſtify, as ſuch " behaviour would entirely over- " throw the firmeſt undertaking, " and caſt the beſt conducted army " into a ſcene of anarchy and con- " fuſion."

" Your goodneſs," replied the bluſhing Douglas, " is a ſufficient

" motive

" motive for any man of feeling,
" who has the honour to be under
" your command, to make it his
" chief pleaſure to obey your
" wiſhes in every thing. Far from
" deſiring to diſpleaſe, it has al-
" ways been my firmeſt wiſh to
" gain the commendation of my
" officers; and, I truſt, there is
" not one of them, except the man
" who has juſt quitted us, but will
" vouch for my character; to clear
" which, though I fear the recital
" will be tedious, it is abſolutely
" neceſſary that you ſhould hear
" my ſtory." Wallace told him,
it would be more a pleaſure than
a trouble;

a trouble; and the young ſoldier, being ordered to ſit down by him, thus began:

"I am the ſon of a hardy old "veteran, who long bore, with the "utmoſt diſdain, the ſovereignty of "the Engliſh. Early I imbibed his "maxims; and before I had at- "tained my fifteenth year, had ſeen "three different actions, and gain- "ed, I hope, ſome honour in the "ſervice. A few years after my "father died, and left me to fight "for my own bread. One battle, "when the fight was raging, and "the cannons thundering in the "air,

" air, while I was pauſing, breath-
" leſs and wounded, viewing the
" different changes of fortune in
" the field, I heard a groan juſt by
" the ſpot on which I ſtood. I
" turned my head, and beheld an
" Engliſh knight upon the ground
" weltering in blood; his youthful
" daughter ſupported his head, and
" ſeemed like a drooping roſe wet-
" ted with the dew; for her tears
" flowed plenteouſly. Charmed
" with her beauty, every thought
" of enmity vaniſhed like the va-
" pour diſpelled by the ſun-beam.
" I addreſſed the knight, and beg-
" ged he would permit me to con-

" duct

" duct him to a place of ſafety, tell-
" ing him, that though an enemy,
" I knew how to revere unfortu-
" nate valour and diſtreſſed beauty.
" ' Scotchman,' ſaid he, rearin ghis
" ſilvered head, ' your port beſpeaks
" you noble; and it would be now
" ungenerous to ſuſpect the truth
" of your profeſſions: remove me
" not from hence; Conon can no
" where die ſo nobly as on the field
" of battle. I know my wounds
" are mortal; fortune favours your
" arms, and I wiſh to die be-
" fore I ſee my enemies victorious.'
" ' Brave Conon', cried I, ' conſent
" to gratify my deſire of ſerving
" you,

" you, and live, if it is but for the
" ſake of your beauteous daughter.'
" He made a faint effort to lift
" himſelf up, but ſunk inſtantly
" again; anſwering, ' It is impoſ-
" ſible; Conon can riſe no more;
" and yet, my Maria, for thy ſake
" I could wiſh to live a little longer.
" Too generous, too affectionate girl!
" why, why would you perſiſt in
" following thy old father to theſe
" ſcenes of *horror?*' The lovely
" virgin ſtood in a ſpeechleſs tre-
" mor over her dying ſire, who
" continued his pathetic tenderneſs.
" ' O! could I find a father for thy
" youth.' ' View him here,' exclaim-
" ed

"ed I, kneeling, and ſeizing his "hand: 'By the all-powerful Ruler "of this globe I ſwear to dedicate "my life to her; to be her friend, "protector, *father*.' 'Generous "young man,' reſumed the faint- "ing knight; 'ſure thou art an an- "gel, ſent by Heaven to comfort "me in my laſt moments. O, Ma- "ria! pay him the ſame obedience "as you would to me. Take her, "Scotchman, with a ſoldier's laſt, "beſt legacy, untainted purity and "ſpotleſs honour.' Here his words "failed him; he graſped my hand, "gazed on his daughter with a "wild affection, and then the

"ſhades

"ſhades of night encircled him for
"ever. I caught his ſwooning
"daughter in my arms, and bore
"her from the field of horror; for
"now the tide of battle rolled nearer
"to us, like the bulky billows in a
"troubled ocean. I gently dragged
"her to the ſhed of a friend of my
"poor father's, which luckily hap-
"pened to be near the ſpot. When
"I delivered her to the old woman of
"the cottage, the lillies had uſurped
"the roſes on her cheek: I gazed
"on her with ſentiments of love
"and pity; but was urged by ho-
"nour to leave her for a while,

" and be preſent at my poſt, when
" I heard that the Scotch had loſt
" the advantage of the day. I tore
" myſelf from the lovely orphan,
" and ruſhed into the thickeſt of the
" fight; but fortune had entirely
" changed her aſpect; and as the
" battle had began glorious to the
" Scotch, ſo too, like a fine morn-
" ing, whoſe evening is obſcured
" with clouds, did all our hopes de-
" cline. I kept myſtation, till religion
" commanded me to uſe my endea-
" vours to preſerve a life which no-
" thing but flight could now ſave.
" Reluctantly I turned my back;

" and

" and on my return to the cottage,
" found my young ward, Maria, juſt-
" recovered from her fit. With all the
" conſolation in my power, long did
" I ſtrive to diſpel the melancholy
" images that preyed upon her
" mind; and promiſed, when ſhe
" recovered health and ſtrength ſuf-
" ficient to undertake the journey,
" I would reſtore her to her friends
" in England. She appeared grate-
" ful for the intereſt I took in her
" welfare, and daily ſeemed to get
" the better of her illneſs. I read
" to her, and took her walks into
" the moſt pleaſant parts of the

" country. I found her ſoul fine,
" delicate, and her underſtanding
" far above her years. Alas! I
" knew not then the flame which was
" daily ſpreading itſelf within my
" boſom. When ſhe had remained
" ſome time with me, and did not
" remind me of my promiſe to re-
" ſtore her to her friends, I began
" to be ſurpriſed, and yet was
" afraid to mention it to her; as I
" knew no thought ſo painful, as
" that of parting with her. I paſſed
" my days in gazing on her charms,
" and yet they ſeemed too ſhort
" for the contemplation of them."

Here

Here Douglas expreſſed his anxiety, leſt he ſhould tire Wallace, who begging him to proceed, the youth continued his ſtory, as in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

"AT length I perceived a cloud
" of melancholy veiling thoſe
" eyes, which had ſo lately ſhone
" with all the eloquence of love
" and tenderneſs. Diſtreſſed, I knew
" no cauſe to which I could aſſign
" this ſudden change: at laſt, the
" dreadful reaſon flaſhed with terror
" on my mind; I thought ſhe ſighed
" for England and her friends, yet
" the delicacy of her g[illegible]itude pre-
" vented her from making her de-
" ſires

" ſires known to me. Various were
" the paſſions which ſtruggled in my
" agitated breaſt; honour bad me
" inſtantly reſtore her to her native
" country, as I had *promiſed*; but then
" her beauties roſe in oppoſition to
" the rigid mandate, and I reſolved
" to loſe her but with life. Our mu-
" tual gloomineſs increaſed; no more
" we ſpent our hours together; but
" the occupations of our days were
" entirely different. The tender
" friendſhip, which had juſt began
" to bloſſom, was now blighted by
" the chilling froſt of cold *civility*.
" My ſoul was on the rack; jea-
" louſy then found an entrance

" into my heart; I feared ſome
" youth of England might have
" occupied the place in her af-
" fections which I was ſo anxious
" to fill. This thought at laſt de-
" termined my wavering ſpirits;
" and I reſolved to give her to the
" arms of her happy favourite.
" With theſe intentions I ſought
" Maria's chamber; and, O! what
" was equal to my deſpair, when I
" beheld her, with her crayons, buſily
" employed in tracing out the figure of
" a youth: ſhe ſeemed to gaze with
" rapture at every ſtroke of her pen-
" cil, and laid on the colours with
" a tranſport that almoſt drove me
" mad,

" mad. She did not ſee me, ſo I
" withdrew unperceived by her.
" Caſting myſelf in an agony upon
" my bed, I burſt into a flood of
" tears; at length reſentment came
" to my relief, and I went down
" ſtairs; the lovely girl was weep-
" ing. 'Madam,' cried I, 'my
" obſervations have convinced me
" that I am not ſo happy as to poſ-
" ſeſs the power of making this ſpot
" agreeable to you; but the honour
" you have done it by your pre-
" ſence, will for ever endear it to
" me. Fate has made me too much
" your inferior, for me ever even
" to hope that I am deſtined to the

" happineſs of ——; but the very
" thought is the height of pre-
" ſumption. To-morrow, madam,
" you ſhall be conducted to the
" arms of thoſe who have a nearer
" right (though not a more ardent
" regard, that is impoſſible) to the
" delights of your converſation.'
" Maria bluſhed deeply, and rearing
" her fine eyes, in whom two tears
" ſeemed ready to fall, and enrich
" the earth on which ſhe ſtood,
" ſobbed forth, 'And ſo you wiſh
" to part with me.' 'Part with
" you! Maria,' cried I; 'if you
" knew the cruel pangs the mere
" thought of ſeparation gives me,

" you

"you would pity the tortures of a "heart which, anxious for your "happineſs, makes a ſacrifice of "its own, and renounces every "hope, in reſtoring you.' Here the "lovely girl ruſhed into my arms, "weeping, and exclaiming, 'Then "let us never part, my kind pre-"ſerver.' Aſtoniſhed and diſmay-"ed, I thought this happineſs too "exquiſite for reality. I fell upon "my knees, and, in a tranſport, "graſped her hand, breathing a "thouſand kiſſes on it. She raiſed "me, and deſired me to follow her, "ſaying, with a ſmile, 'You ſhall

" ſee you have conſtantly been be-
" fore me.' I conducted her to her
" chamber, which entering, I be-
" held the picture which had occa-
" ſioned me ſuch agonies; but how
" were my ſenſations altered, when,
" on a nearer view, I beheld that it
" was myſelf that had engaged her
" ſkill.

" I ſhall tire you, Sir," ſaid the young narrator, " with theſe minute " deſcriptions; which, though the " deareſt hours of my life, cannot " poſſibly afford the leaſt ſatisfac- " tion to you." Wallace benignantly

nantly ſmiling, begged he would not omit any thing in his (as he termed it) entertaining hiſtory.

"We were ſhortly after married," continued Douglas. "Thoſe, and "thoſe alone, who have had the "happineſs of preſſing to their bo- "ſoms an amiable, long-loved ob- "ject, can conceive the thrilling joy "this wiſhed-for union afforded us. "Our days and nights were ſcenes "of never-palling happineſs: and "in thoſe moments I even forgot "the tyranny my native country "groaned beneath; for about this "period Edward had ſubdued our "realms,

" realms, depoſed our monarch, and
" left us defenceleſs, and without a
" head to ſpirit us to action. At
" length, when the firſt tranſports
" of poſſeſſion had ſubſided, and
" glory once more reſumed her em-
" pire in my breaſt, I heard from
" an old friend, who required my
" aſſiſtance, to fight under a chief
" (whom he had received a letter
" from), that was preparing to lead
" us on to liberty. I heard too,
" that he was the ſon of the gallant
" Wallace; of whoſe friendſhip and
" valour my aged father uſed to
" talk with rapture; calling him as
" brave a chief as ever fought his
" coun-

"country's battles. My boſom was
"on fire at the intelligence; and I
"informed Maria of my firm de-
"termination; for I ſaw our ſturdy
"youth, and even hoary aged,
"warmed by the cauſe, and bleſſ-
"ing you for the thought; vowing
"to live and die by you. The
"lovely girl a while oppoſed my in-
"clinations; but when at laſt ſhe
"perceived every thing too weak to
"turn me from the courſe of glory,
"'Well,' cried ſhe, 'the battle
"ſhall not ſever us; diſguiſed as a
"young Highlander, I will follow
"you; and, bleſſed with your pre-
"ſence, I can deſpiſe danger.' In vain
"I at-

" I attempted to turn her inclina-
" tions from ſo raſh an enterpriſe.
" 'I can ſee no danger,' the lovely
" creature would anſwer, 'ſo great
" as that of loſing you; ſet me the
" example, and relinquiſh your de-
" ſign, or I will never yield up
" mine.' At laſt I was forced to con-
" ſent, and ſhe was permitted to
" follow as an auxiliary. Here we
" had the happineſs of living toge-
" ther, and mutually admiring the
" magnanimity of your conduct
" through all our dangerous march.
" At length a ſervile follower of
" Alexander's made a diſcovery of
" her ſex; and laſt night, when we

" were

" were engaged in a delightful con-
" verſation, three men entered the
" tent, and laid violent hands upon
" my wife. Provoked, I ſtruck one
" of the audacious villains to the
" ground; and at that inſtant Alex-
" ander entered; the men retired,
" whilſt he marched up to the trem-
" bling fair-one. Unable to brook
" the indecent liberties he took with
" her, I begged him, as he was a
" ſoldier and a man, to quit his
" hold. He anſwered me with in-
" ſolence and barbarity, at the ſame
" time aiming a blow at me. Here
" all thoughts of prudence deſerted
" me, and I drew my ſword:
" ' Strike

" 'Strike at your peril,' cried he. I
" paused a moment; but *his* sword
" in an instant was drawn, and he
" made a pass at me. I could not
" tamely suffer myself to be mur-
" dered by a ruffian; so answered
" his attack, and wounded him:
" again he rushed with fury on me,
" and I caught his sword out of his
" hand. Breathless and trembling
" under my power, I told him not
" to be alarmed; for I intended to
" make no use of the advantage I
" had gained. Having said this, I
" sheathed my own sword, and return-
" ed him his; which he no sooner
" received, than, like a coward, he
" flew

" flew upon me, and would have
" put a period to my exiſtence, had
" not Maria (who had been run-
" ning about and ſcreaming for help
" all this time) entered the room at
" the inſtant with a party of men.
" At their appearance Alexander
" deſiſted, and ordered the ſoldiers to
" ſeize me; the prayers of Maria
" were of no avail, and I was drag-
" ged before you to receive my
" ſentence.

" This is the truth, moſt noble
" general; if I am guilty, I will ſub-
" mit with pleaſure to the heavieſt
" puniſhment my fault deſerves; if

" innocent, I know your juſtice,
" and confide in it."

Here Douglas having finiſhed his ſtory, bowed to Wallace, who had been liſtening to the tale with great attention.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

WALLACE found ſeveral paſſages in the hiſtory of this young ſoldier ſo ſimilar to his own, that he could not help being intereſted in his fate: therefore taking him by the hand, "Douglas," ſaid he, "your behaviour has been juſt "and honourable. I have myſelf been uſed with tyranny, and, "*like you*, reſiſted it.

"You have done wrong in bringing a female to my camp; but love,

" I am well convinced, is much " more powerful than prudence. " Alas! I have myſelf felt its force." Here our hero heaved a ſigh. " But " it is now time to let Alexander " have juſtice." The captain was ſent for, and reprehended by his general in the following words:

" If to protect an injured female " from the brutal appetite of a ruf- " fian be accounted mutiny, I hope " there is not another ſoldier in my " camp but would, in that caſe, be " ſeditious. I have heard both your " ſtories. This young ſoldier was " compelled, by your unmanlike

" fury,

" fury, to draw in the defence of
" his own life; which if he had
" not done, he would have ſtood
" accountable to God for not aim-
" ing at the preſervation of his gift.
" Therefore, Alexander, you muſt,
" in the preſence of all your of-
" ficers, intreat pardon of this in-
" jured youth for your offence."

Here Douglas interpoſed, and kindly begged his captain might not be degraded.

" Degraded!" cried Wallace, " it
" is the only means by which he
" can reſtore himſelf to his former

" dignity." Alexander's features underwent a variety of changes. At laſt, as if irreſiſtibly compelled by the generoſity of Douglas, he begged that he would obliterate his former cruelty from his memory.

The ſtripling bluſhed, and begged he would ſay no more upon the diſagreeable ſubject.

Thus was this quarrel terminated; and the two late enemies afterwards formed a ſtrict and inviolable friendſhip for each other.

Maria

Maria was commanded to quit her man's attire; and Wallace gave orders that ſhe ſhould be properly equipped, to follow her huſband in her proper dreſs.

The happy couple dropped the tears of gratitude before their generous benefactor, who received them with all the kindneſs of a benevolent Being who makes it his happineſs to contribute to the content of others.

Tidings were ſoon brought, that the armies of Edward were ſpreading deſtruction among all the help-

leſs villagers in every part of Scotland; that the tender infant and the ſnow-crowned old man fell equally a prey to their deſtructive fury.

Wallace immediately ordered his troops to be ready for a march towards the river Carron, where he underſtood the Engliſh were committing great depredations.

The army was ſoon in readineſs, and they began their march the next morning, when the ſun was playing upon the dew-drops, and loading the leaves, making the trees appear

as if they were loaded with that fruit which are mentioned in tales of inchantment.

In the midſt of their journey they were ſurpriſed at perceiving a number of armed heads and ſpears peeping above the mountains.

Wallace now perceived that the enemy intended to take him by ſurpriſe; and whilſt he was conſulting how he beſt might guard againſt their deſigns, a detachment of his ſoldiers brought a youth before him, charging him with being a ſpy. One of the captains immediately

propoſed

propoſed putting him to death; but our hero made it an invariable rule to uſe mercy, if any pretext could be found for it. The priſoner was called before him, and was aſked who he was.

"A Scotchman," anſwered he.

"A Scotchman!" cried Wallace. "Are not you aſhamed to own the "name?"

"No," replied the ſpy, "Bruce "never did an action which he "ought to bluſh at. For eighteen "years, the ſum of all my life (ſave "one),

" one), the Engliſh king has ſhel-
" tered and protected me with his
" royal favour. How then ſhould
" I appear to thee, and to my coun-
" trymen, if, like a traitor, I had
" betrayed his truſt? But you have
" intercepted my deſign; the law
" of war will juſtify your conduct,
" in treating me as you pleaſe. I
" am not afraid of death, for I am
" ſure that I can brave it."

Here Bruce caſt a diſdainful look on all around him. The officers of Wallace crouded to their general, and begged the priſoner might be ordered to his fate directly; but our hero

hero had too much generoſity to ſupport the thought of dooming to death a man whoſe prejudices, though perhaps unjuſt, undoubtedly were generous. Gratitude for paſt favours had induced him to join Edward; and *gratitude could not be blamed.*

He ordered him into ſafe cuſtody; many having in vain endeavoured to extort the poſture of the Engliſh army from him: he ſtill remained inflexible, and told them he ſcorned to betray the confidence that he had been honoured with.

Wallace

Wallace ordered him to be confined, and was continually haraſſed by the officers, whom the inſolence of Bruce had galled ſeverely, to put him out of the way directly. All ſeemed anxious to ſee public execution done on him.

Far different were the feelings of our hero; he was ſtruck with admiration at the magnanimity, and pity for the misfortunes, of his young enemy. He ſpent the night in meditating how he might preſerve young Bruce without infringing on the rigid articles of war: For

Great ſouls by inſtinct to each other turn,
Melt in alliance, and in friendſhip burn.

So

So it was with Wallace. At length he came to a determination of giving the young Scotchman an opportunity of eſcaping; and with this intent he ſought the ſpot where he was confined; but great was his pity and indignation, when he beheld the intrepid Bruce ſtretched on a bed of ſtraw, and loaded with galling fetters, which confined him to the ground; a ſcanty pittance of bread and water ſtood by his ſide.

"Heavens," cried Wallace, "what a ſcene is here!" Rouſed by a voice, the manly priſoner rattled his chains, and ſeeing Wallace, exclaimed,

claimed, "What, are you there, "Sir! I hope your ſavage heart is "ſatisfied; the laws of war pro- "nounce but death againſt my fault, "but you, not ſatisfied, have added "cruelty."

"*I* added cruelty!" cried the aſtoniſhed general. "O! believe "my innocence of your ſuffer- "ings."

"Innocence!" anſwered the cap- tive; "can I behold you with "any other paſſion than contempt, "when I ſee theſe chains? A thief, "a murderer, could not have ſuf-

" fered ſuch indignities; but I, that
" am a ſoldier——"

" Aye, and a gallant one," exclaimed Wallace.

" Then you ought to know how
" to treat one," returned Bruce.
" If you wiſh to proſper, win your
" enemies by clemency. Your hue
" and cry is raiſed againſt the ty-
" ranny of the Engliſh. How then
" dare any of you look me in the
" face, and yet cry out againſt
" cruelty?"

" Hear

"Hear me," cried our hero. "By Heaven and all its powers "I ſwear, that I am ignorant of "the indignities which have been "heaped on you; and if it "would not prove a bar to my in-"tentions of ſnatching you from "the jaws of deſtruction, I would "puniſh your inſulters: but to "convince you of my innocence, "receive your liberty from me." So ſaying, he ſeized the keys, which were ſuſpended by a nail, and unlocked his fetters.

"This generoſity from an enemy," cried the liberated Bruce, "quite

" overpowers me. O, Sir, you " now indeed have conquered me."

" No," anſwered Wallace, " I " muſt no longer be eſteemed your " enemy; I admire valour, though " it is exerted againſt me; beſides, " it may be yours to ſerve me in " return."

" If," cried Bruce, " it may be " done without injuring my ho- " nour, it will be my pride and " happineſs."

" Enough," anſwered his brave preſerver, and proceeded to his point.

" I have

"I have a wife, Sir," ſaid he;—"have,
"did I ſay?—alas! I know not whe-
"ther I *have* or *no*.—But Oh, Ma-
"tilda! wherever thou art, my ſoul
"is with thee. No time, no changes
"can obliterate thy image, which
"ſtill is perfect in my breaſt. Theſe
"ſeventeen years I have not ſeen
"her. My infant too was torn
"from me with her; and though
"a traitor gave me information of
"her having taken refuge in a con-
"vent, yet the diſcovery of his
"many villanies makes me ſuſpect
"the tale a falſehood, formed to
"protect him from my juſt re-
"venge; which yet the monſter

" ſhall not eſcape. If England is
" happy in her preſence, and your
" fortune ſhould ever chance to
" throw you in her way, O! tell
" her, a fond huſband groans for
" her; the din of war has not
" energy enough to drown the cries
" of love, or ſtop the bleedings of
" a heart wounded by abſence. If
" poſſible, reſtore her to theſe arms,
" and I will erect an altar to your
" name, and adore you as my
" guardian genius."

Bruce, moved to tears at this pathetic addreſs, ſwore, if ever Fate ſhould favour him with a ſight of

Matilda,

Matilda, he would, if poſſible, ſee her conveyed back to Scotland.

But now the red ſtreaks of morn had pierced through the clouds of night, and the opening flowers proclaimed the preſence of the roſy Aurora.

The cock's ſhrill clarion began to echo through the tents, when Wallace, embracing his new friend, and informing him of the watch-word by which he was to eſcape the guard, took his farewell of him; whilſt the grateful youth ſwore that nothing ſhould ever weaken his attachment to his brave deliverer.

Wallace retiring to his tent, enjoyed ſeveral hours of ſweet and uninterrupted ſlumber. Early in the morning the captains of his hoſt appeared before him; begging his preſence at the execution of the ſpy. He blinded their doubts, by enquiring if the ſcaffolding was perfectly ready, and ſigning the death-warrant.

The trumpets breathed a deadly blaſt, and the muffled drums ſtruck up a dead march; all the horrid pomp of death was prepared, when a ſoldier, breathleſs and pale, appeared before Wallace, and, throwing

ing himſelf at his feet, implored his forgiveneſs, for being ſo careleſs as to let the priſoner eſcape. Our hero affected great anger on this occaſion, and told the ſoldier, that if he did not behave extremely well in the approaching battle, he ſhould anſwer ſeverely for his neglect.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

MATTERS being thus adjuſted, our hero returned to his tent, but ſcarcely had ſeated himſelf to take a ſlight repaſt, when a ſoldier came in, and told him that the Engliſh forces would, in an hour at fartheſt, give them the attack. The ſword of the undaunted Wallace gleamed in an inſtant, like a meteor in the air; the ſhrill blaſt of war reached from the oppoſing tents,

and

and every chief appeared, in a few minutes, blazing in burniſhed arms.

" Succeſs," ſaid our brave general, " has as yet ſat like the " dazzling eagle on our creſts, ſhak- " ing her pinions. The foe ad- " vances, then ſummon up your " courage; your wives, your chil- " dren, all demand the great ex- " ertion. Oppreſſion, like the " ſkulking owl, ſhall hide her head " in endleſs night; and hiſtory's " page ſhall rank us with thoſe " Roman heroes who fought, who " bled, who *died* for liberty. If " any one of you is baſe enough

" to

" to fear, he has free liberty to fly;
" but none, I hope, who have en-
" gaged themſelves in ſuch a cauſe
" as ours *can* condeſcend to be
" alarmed. I, your general, in-
" tend to mingle with the meaneſt
" of my ſoldiers, and my portion
" in *the ſpoil* ſhall be no larger than
" the loweſt private's in our ranks.
" Then follow me to death or vic-
" tory."

Here every ſoldier, ſhouting forth " Wallace for ever," ruſhed after him, and perceived the Engliſh ready to receive them.

A cloud

A cloud of arrows from their bowmen, in an inſtant darkened the day. But the troops of Wallace contrived to guard them off tolerably, by bending under their bucklers; then watching a convenient opportunity, ruſhed forward with their broad-ſwords in their hands; in this they had ſo evident a ſuperiority, that the Engliſh ſtood aghaſt, and could only attempt to ſtem the torrent with their oppoſing ſpears, which they held forth.

The battle was maintained with the greateſt obſtinacy on both ſides; our hero was ſeen every where, mowing

mowing down the ranks of his enemy, his feet ſtained with blood, over which he ſlid; ſometimes he appeared riſing on a mountain of dead bodies; at others, engaged in lower ſituations with an unequal number.

The Engliſh flew before him, like the duſty torrent urged by the potent whirlwind. His foes ſtood aſtoniſhed, like the herdſman, when in the pleaſant vale he on a ſudden hears the thunder ſhake the ſhuddering earth, and ſees the blue lightning ſhoot the gleams of horror, he flies for ſuccour to his cot. So

did the frightened Engliſhmen ruſh from the ſword of Wallace, and ſeemed univerſally to contend who firſt ſhould eſcape him.

But, ah! a harder deſtiny purſued his faithful friend Montieth. He, like a young eagle who pants to emulate the ſoaring glory of his ſire, followed his brave leader through the ghaſtly ranks of death. Animated by the example of his friend, he ſwept all before him, and appeared another terror to the Engliſh.

At length a Kentiſh archer, who had beheld a friend and brother fall

victims

victims to the valour of Montieth; and gazing on his dying agonies, affection proved too ſtrong for prudence in his breaſt; he placed an arrow in his fatal bow, which he bent double, and ſent forth the meſſenger of his revenge.

The arrow hiſſed a while in the air; but too true to its aim, pierced through the boſom of Montieth. The gallant chieftain reeled ſome paces when he felt the wound. Wallace ſeeing him ſtagger, flew to the ſpot, and caught his falling friend. "I fear this wound is deadly," cried he.

"Fear

"Fear not," anſwered Montieth, "I know the ſtroke is fatal; I ſaw "the wretch who gave it, and I "live but for *revenge*."

So ſaying, he flew upon the archer, whom he viewed beginning to truſt to his heels, and arrived time enough to aim a blow, which ſevered the archer's head from his body, which directly dropped a ſenſeleſs trunk upon the earth.

Wallace followed to aſſiſt him: "Chearly, my friend," cried he, "the Engliſh are giving ground."

"I would,"

"I would," anſwered Montieth, "that, like the Roman hero, it "might be poſſible for me to wear "this arrow in my breaſt till victory "ſhould ſend me to the ſhades of "my forefathers: but, ah! it will "not be, the ſhaft that has tranſfixed "me is the dart of death; I burn; "I can no longer bear it."

Having ſaid this, he plucked the arrow from his ſide, and ſtaggered to the arms of his friend, who placed him gently on that earth from which he *never* more was doomed to riſe.

"Live,"

"Live," cried the agoniſed Wallace, "live to conſole me for the "loſs of my Matilda. O, this is "hard indeed! that you, who have "ſtruggled ſo manfully in the cauſe "of freedom, cannot ſurvive to taſte "its joys. Deprived of wife and "friend, what have I now to ani-"mate my ſoul to glory?"

The eyes of the dying man had now loſt all their fire: affected by the paſſionate ſpeech of his friend, he claſped his hand. "Wallace," cried he, "ſuffer me to die, as it becomes "a ſoldier, upon the field of battle, "with *ſmiles*. You are now near

" a mile from the ſcene of glory;
" let not any thought of me detain
" you.—My breath fails. Two
" cautions I muſt give you, or I
" ſhall not die in peace: beware
" of Arran; he is a falſe deceiving
" traitor; cheriſh the merit of the
" riſing Douglas; he loves and ho-
" nours you. If fate ſhould ever
" to your arms again reſtore Ma-
" tilda, tell her my youth was ſpent
" in gazing on her charms, and that
" I died admiring her. Our friend-
" ſhip ——"

Here pain grew too powerful, and Montieth, heaving a heavy groan,

groan, expired, liſtening to a trumpet, which at that time ſighed forth a heavy blaſt, as if in compliment to as brave a ſoldier as it had ever animated to the dangers of the battle.

Wallace dropped a tear upon his face, and gazed on his breathleſs corſe ſo long, that he would have loſt all recollection of the cauſe which he was engaged in, had not the fight rolled nearer to the ſpot on which he ſtood. He then rouſed himſelf, ſwearing that many an Engliſhman ſhould go to the infernal ſhades, to accompany his deceaſed

friend. Animated with this idea, he again mingled among the warriors.

The Engliſhmen, in the abſence of our two friends, no more terrified by the idea of the gods of war (for ſo they thought them), and concluding they were ſlain, rallied back their men from the flight they had premeditated, and ruſhed on their oppoſers.

The Scotch, who, aſtoniſhed at this unexpected retort, ſtood in a ſtate of petrifaction, were about to turn *themſelves* to flight, when the appear-

appearance of their leader immediately occaſioned an exulting ſhout; he threw himſelf in an inſtant, like Fate, among the ranks of the aſtoniſhed Engliſh. But in the middle of his career he tumbled to the ground, having ſlipped over a dead body. An Engliſh ſoldier (hardier than the reſt of his companions, who had conceived ſuch a horror of his very looks, that even on the ground they were afraid of him), actuated by the expectation of a great reward, drowning his fears, ſtepped up to our proſtrate hero; and placing his ſword to his

breaſt, told him that inſtant was his laſt. Wallace looking with an air of diſdain upon the fellow, prepared for his end with fortitude, and thought his fate was inevitable, till rearing his eyes, he beheld the Engliſhman bending beneath the force of a common Highland ſoldier, whoſe countenance was horribly diſfigured with blood.

Our hero ſnatched the opportunity of avoiding his fate, and jumping up, forced the ſword from the hand of the Engliſhman, who lay on the ground bawling for mercy.

With

With this inſtrument he ſoon diſperſed the crowd who ſtood round gazing on him, and then threw a ring to his brave deliverer; ſwearing, at the ſame time, to make him happy, in any requeſt his power could gratify, after the fight ſhould be concluded. The ſtranger bowed, and kiſſed the ring.

The inſpired Scotchmen now perceived the Engliſh fall before them, like the ſummer leaves at the approach of icy-handed Winter; and their general finding all oppoſition uſeleſs, ſounded a retreat.

The Scotch would immediately have followed, and put their flying enemy to the ſword; but Wallace, ever foremoſt in the cauſe of mercy, recalled his forces, and ſuffered the Engliſh calmly to make their retreat, and tell their tale to Edward.

Gratitude was his next care; and ſummoning his men, he told them, all their valours claimed his warmeſt thanks and praiſes; but that to one of them he was indebted even for life. He ſaid that it was a ſatiſfaction to him, that his ſoldiers thought his exiſtence worth preſerving.

ſerving. He then publicly enquired which of them could produce a ring that he had given him; for that he who poſſeſſed *that* pledge was his deliverer. They then ſtared upon one another, unable to gueſs the meaning of this ſpeech, till Douglas ſtepping forth, thus began:

"It is not the delight which I "take in recording my *own* actions, "which induces me to appear be- "fore you, Sir; but to convince "you of my gratitude, and the "high rate at which I prize your "favours. It has been my *fortune*, "not my *valour*, to defend your life;

"for

" for I am well convinced, that
" there is not a man of us but
" would lay down his own exiſt-
" ence for the preſervation of
" your's; the ray of gratitude muſt
" warm the coldeſt heart. So good
" a general—But the ſhadow of
" flattery I know you deteſt.

" As I was obſerving how our
" detachment might be moſt uſe-
" ful, I perceived you make a
" trip; I flew to your aſſiſtance,
" overturned the ruffian, whoſe eyes
" were gleaming with tranſport
" over you.—It may ſeem like
" vanity to relate the reſt. But to
" confirm

" confirm the truth of my af-
" ſertions, I beg you will endea-
" vour to recollect this ring, which
" I conſider as the greateſt treaſure
" of my life; as it can teſtify my
" love, reſpect, and gratitude."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

WALLACE preſſed the young hero to his boſom, and preſented him to the ſoldiers as his deliverer. They hailed the glowing Douglas with repeated ſhouts; throwing up their caps, and bleſſing him, as the preſerver of their general.

Wallace directly created him a captain; and his fellow-ſoldiers, far from envying, rejoiced in his promotion; for they knew, from his modeſt

modeſt humility and conſtant tender concern for their ſafety, that his *ear* would conſtantly be open to, and and his *heart* ready to relieve, their diſtreſs.

From that time forward Douglas filled the place of the departed Montieth in the breaſt of our hero, and they ſwore to preſerve an inviolable friendſhip for each other, which to the laſt was mutually performed.

O Friendſhip! thou ſoother of all the cares of human life; thou balm of wounded minds; thou ſpur to noble actions, lend me thy aſſiſt-

ance to paſs the thorny paths of life; for without thee the robe of power would ſit heavier on its royal wearer than the garb of penury upon the want-pinched cottager.—

Life without thee would be as a gloomy dungeon, unillumined by any ray of light. Then, celeſtial goddeſs, lend thy torch, light each noble ſpirit to the end of life; ſupport them in the fiery trials of adverſity, and conſole them for the treachery and degeneracy of mankind.

But

But I am wandering from my hiſtory; yet I truſt that all my readers, who have known the pure delights of diſintereſted friendſhip, will pardon this ſhort digreſſion, and join me in my prayer.

But to return: Wallace, who, though elated with ſucceſs, yet was too good a ſoldier to ſuffer his men to ſink into idleneſs and inactivity; he determined, therefore, without delay to croſs the Carron, and give king Edward, who commanded there in perſon, inſtant battle: Then, if victory ſhould attend his endeavours, to make his way to London; force the

the citizens to reſtore his king; and if they refuſed, endeavour to perſuade his heart to

Havock, and let ſlip the dogs of war.
SHAKESPEAR.

But this he intended to avoid, if poſſible; for though inured to a camp, his heart was too full of the milk of human kindneſs to permit him to view, without horror, the ſight of murdered children, and widows ſhrieking over the biers of their departed huſbands. To men he could be as fierce as a lion; but when the diſtreſs of a woman ſtruck upon his ear, he was a very lamb; and at an infant's tale his eyes would relax

from

from their natural fierceneſs, and he would gaze with rapture on the cherub who twined his fingers in his golden locks. With ſentiments of pity he began his expedition, and ordered his ſoldiers to direct their courſe towards the river Carron. Their march, though long, was agreeable; the mountains at that time of year were crowned with moſs, and the guſhing cataracts of water from their tops formed a delightful ſcene.

Romance cannot produce a more grand or pleaſant ſcene than the interior parts of Scotland at that

time afforded. But modern refinement, alas! has reduced knight errantry to fooliſh gallantry, and auguſt grandeur to faſhionable ſlopings.

The days of chivalry are now no more. But let thoſe who treat theſe ages with contempt, remember, that England was never in a ſtate of greater glory than when the brave were employed in the aſſiſtance of the fair, and the ſtout ſoldier, inſtead of fluttering round the toilette, broke the lance, and defied the fiery courſer of his rival, in the defence of her he adored.

Thoſe days can return no more, but the noble heart ſtill feels a pleaſure in recollecting them; and with theſe feelings I return to my hiſtory; of which, if my readers are growing weary, I muſt beg they will not now caſt away the little volume, but continue it to the end; which, for their comfort, I aſſure them is approaching with rapid ſtrides.

Wallace, whenever he perceived the ſpirits of his ſoldiers beginning to flag, would animate the ſleeping embers of glory to a blaze, by talking of the rights of liberty, and pre-

dicting the time when every Highlander might ſecure the friendſhip of his king, by that moſt firm of all ties, mutual obligation. "He," cried our heroic leader, "never can "have the ingratitude to forget you, "who have hazarded your all to re-"place him in his former ſeat of "glory; and you, I truſt, will ever "reverence a monarch who will re-"tain a juſt ſenſe of all your favours, "by ruling you with mercy and "generoſity."

He painted the rewards of their conduct in the livelieſt colours. "Not one of you," cried he, "when "the

" the danger is over, and peace and
" plenty pour forth their exube-
" rant ſtores, but will rejoice in the
" reflection of your paſt difficulties;
" like the ſeaman, who, when the
" bleak tempeſt, mixed with deſcend-
" ing ſtorms, ariſes, feels horrid ap-
" prehenſions at the rolling of the
" dreadful thunder, when the vaſt
" waves break in mountains, and the
" liquid lightnings ſhoot along the
" æther; but at length, arrived at his
" long loſt home, and conſoled by the
" delights of love and friendſhip, he
" feels a tranſport in reflecting on
" his paſt perils; and the ſmile

" of ſucceſs ſeems doubly pleaſant
" after the miſts of deſpair."

Animated by theſe hopes, the ſoldiers grew aſhamed of their deſpondence, and would begin their work, if poſſible, with more alacrity than ever.

On the ridge of a lofty mountain, an Engliſh ſoldier was ſeen ſounding a parley. The hero of our tale ordered a flag of truce to be unfurled. The meſſenger deſcended, and, kneeling, delivered a letter to Wallace; which opening, he read as follows:

" Though

"Though conſcious of my guilt
"and perfidy, yet the hope of
"making retribution to you, and
"to my injured countrymen, in-
"ſpires me with the thought of
"writing to you; to own my faults,
"and, by a full confeſſion of my
"perfidy, to reſtore myſelf to the
"dignity I have loſt by deſcending
"to the meaneſt of artifices: falſe
"to my king and friend, I hope
"that *love*, which has been made
"an excuſe for the faults of *many*,
"will be ſome palliation for *me*.
"When I informed you of Ma-
"tilda's having taken the veil, I
"firmly thought my allegations

" ſtrictly true; where ſhe is now,
" Heaven and the Engliſh tyrant
" only knows. I have obtained a
" poſt under him, which his inſo-
" lence daily renders painful and
" degrading. Come to me then
" (that we may ſettle affairs with-
" out ſuſpicion) entirely unattend-
" ed.—My caſtle riſes by the ſurge
" of the Carron.—I can betray the
" Engliſh to your power, and prove
" myſelf not entirely unworthy the
" friendſhip of my countrymen.

" Your penitent

" ARRAN."

Wallace

Wallace at firſt wavered between the hope and doubt of the ſincerity of this epiſtle. But at length, knowing himſelf to be devoid of craft, he thought it ungenerous to ſuſpect another.

Therefore calling the meſſenger to him, "Tell Arran," ſaid he, "that his noble conduct reunites "him to my ſoul, and that I feel "more happineſs in his repentance, "than if he never had forfeited my "love: to *commit* a fault is mor-"tal, but to *confeſs* it, ſomewhat "more. Tell him theſe arms are "open to receive him."

Having

Having diſmiſſed the Engliſh ſoldier with this friendly meſſage, he told theſe joyful tidings to his own men, who, though ready to fight at any time, could not help reflecting with pleaſure on terminating the affair without bloodſhed.

Wallace, however, warned them not to put too much confidence in theſe promiſes, but to prepare themſelves with the ſame diligence as if war was inevitable; and he ſpent the night in paſſing through their ranks, and examining the men; that by his own conduct they might be ſure there yet was danger.

The

The aſpiring Douglas, far adverſe to the reſt of the troops, ſeemed alone to be diſcontented with the means that had deferred the war. The riſing hopes of glory had poſſeſſed his young breaſt, and his active ſpirit could not bear the thought of terminating this diſpute by the deſertion of a double traitor.

"How can we truſt this wretch?" would he ſay to Wallace. "When "England was our maſter, did he "not ſculk and curry favour there? "and nothing but the terror of our "ſucceſsful arms has brought him "to this ſeeming friendſhip with us.

"Deceive

" Deceive the villain, then; and
" ſhew him that we ſcorn to con-
" quer by any paltry method; that
" our own ſwords can do juſtice to
" our cauſe, without bartering with
" traitors."

Wallace praiſed the ardour of his young friend, though he refuſed to adopt the method he propoſed. " Every commander," anſwered our hero, " is accountable to God and
" man for the lives of thoſe en-
" truſted to his care; for though
" the rights of nations may demand
" the ſword to vindicate their great
" prerogatives, yet how could I
" defend

" defend myſelf to my all-powerful
" Maſter, if, when I had it in my
" hands to prevent, I let deſtruc-
" tion looſe upon my fellow-crea-
" tures, and doomed to death thoſe
" whom honour, humanity, every
" thing called upon me to pre-
" ſerve?"

He aſſured the attentive youth, that he deſpiſed as much as him the traitor who could betray the truſt repoſed in him. But yet he could find nothing that would juſtify him in refuſing his aſſiſtance.

Douglas

Douglas bowed, obedient to the ſuperior wiſdom of his general; but could not help expreſſing a deſire that the profeſſions of Arran might be falſe; he longed to owe all to the proweſs of arms; and his Maria could alone conſole him for his diſappointment.

Their march was at length concluded, and Wallace pitched his tent exactly oppoſite that part of the river Carron where the camp of Edward fronted them. Now that period which our hero ſo long had eagerly ſought for was arrived: he

ſaw

ſaw the Engliſh chiefs who moſt had injured him; he beheld too the tyrant Edward at their head; and the delights of glory and revenge ſeemed doubly faſcinating. At one moment he reſolved to form a bridge, and ſtorm the Engliſh camp immediately; at others, pity would diſarm him of every bloody thought, and he made reſolutions of claiming a truce, and compromiſing with the Engliſh king. This action his pride rejected, and he reſolved rather to be a gainer by the villainy of Arran, than condeſcend to aſk a favour of a man he deteſted, and

whom

whom the injuries of Matilda had made doubly odious to him.

Her image charmed his wearied mind; for now or never he perceived he was to behold her; and love and honour nerved his mind with ſuch a firmneſs, that he reſolved to ſend a bold defiance to the Engliſh troops, and by inſulting ſigns provoke them to a deciſive battle. But moſt of the royal forces had ſuffered too much from northern valour in their former ſkirmiſhes, to wiſh to come to any ſuch a criſis. Edward threatened, bribed, and

and promiſed in vain; he ſaw the trepidation which the name of Wallace excited in his ſoldiers, and foretold with terror, that his long-laboured conqueſts would be deſtroyed by the reſolution and exertion of a *ſingle man.*

Though pride, revenge, and every other human paſſion contended ſtrongly in his heart, yet he ſaw no other means of diſſipating the tempeſt that was hovering over him, than by gaining Wallace to his intereſt. This ſtake was his laſt, and his officers, who could endure the thought of any thing but com-

ing to an engagement with the North Britons, perſuaded him ſtrongly to this meaſure.

The mortified monarch was obliged to conquer his pride, and ſend his enemy a ſubmiſſive meſſage, requeſting the favour of a conference with him; ſtipulating, THAT each ſhould be ſurrounded by his troops, and oaths taken, that hoſtilities ſhould not be commenced during the converſation.

The terms were fair and honourable. Wallace returned for anſwer, That he would wait upon

his majeſty. The next morning was appointed for this important meeting; martial muſic was heard all the night floating on every ſide of the river Carron, and uſhered in the two chiefs the next morning.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

EDWARD firſt advanced, in an armour of burniſhed gold; in the joints the mingled pearl and ſapphire ſeemed to rival each other's beauty; and the diamond which blazed in his creſt, ſhot back the rays of the ſun, that trembled upon it with redoubled luſtre. The captains of his army thronged round him, rich in all the luxurious habiliments of war: the common ſoldiers, at a diſtance, ſeemed like a hoſt of kings, and

and their leaders, by the ſplendor of their dreſſes, beings of a ſuperior nature.

But this grandeur loſt its intended effect in dazzling the eyes of Wallace. His plaid, tied round his ſhoulders, was his only ornament, and the nodding horſe-hair on his iron helmet, added a fierceneſs to his look, that might have appalled the god of war himſelf; yet when he took it off, in token of reſpect to his illuſtrious enemy, the Cyprian goddeſs might have miſtaken him for her own ſoft Adonis.

The ſoldiers of either party ſtruck their inverted ſpears into the earth, then uttered a ſhout.

At length the two generals advanced, and the Engliſh monarch thus began:

"ILLUSTRIOUS WALLACE,

"When I reflect upon your va-
"lour, and the many hardſhips
"you have, at various periods, ſo
"manfully endured, I muſt con-
"feſs your praiſe flows involuntarily
"from my lips, and I am forced to
"ſee the hero in my enemy; a
"light which you are pleaſed to

"place

" place me in. But now, I hope,
" our quarrels here will ceaſe; and
" that the deadly frowns of war
" may be converted to a mutual
" friendſhip. I know you think
" me cruel and unjuſt; that when
" I doomed you to the wars in
" France, I uſed you like a tyrant;
" yet even there you ſhould have
" done me juſtice, and conſidered,
" that from my earlieſt infancy I
" had been ſtraining to bring your
" ſtubborn countrymen to own me
" for their ſovereign; to which
" title I could even to *you* produce a
" clear undoubted right. The ſhep-
" herd will for his little cottage

" fight moſt deſperately; then who
" can blame a king, wronged of
" his royal right, a crown? My
" ends were juſt obtained, when
" you, rebellious (for I muſt ſpeak
" the truth), conſpired againſt the
" peace of my dominions. What
" then had I to do? Self-pre-
" ſervation is the firſt, the firmeſt
" law of nature, your *removal*
" (and it was hardly poſſible to diſ-
" penſe with your death) being
" abſolutely neceſſary to the quiet
" of thouſands. You charge me
" with detaining as a priſoner your
" wife—that I deny ——"

" O Hea-

"O Heaven!" cried Wallace, "tell me, does ſhe live?"

"She does," anſwered the king, "and ſhall be reſtored to you, only "conſent to ratify the peace, and "liſten to my terms. Firſt, Your "king ſhall become a deputy in my "dominions; his power ſhall be "reſtricted by my laws, and your "country ſhall be conſidered as *my* "people. *You* ſhall have high ap-"pointments under government "when you have ſtood a trial for re-"bellion, which ſhall be only mere "matter of ceremony; for if con-"demned, it will be in my power

"to

" to pardon you. You, your king,
" and all the Scottiſh realms, ſhall
" take an oath of firm obedience,
" and own yourſelves my ſubjects.
" Do this, and peace ſhall ſmile
" upon your fertile plains; your
" king ſhall poſſeſs every thing but
" the name of royalty; your wife
" ſhall be reſtored you, and the reſt
" of your life ſhall glide on in peace
" and happineſs."

Here Edward finiſhed,—his ſoldiers ſhouted; whilſt the Scotch troops, with mingled fury and contempt, gazed on the king who had made ſuch a propoſal; a univerſal murmur

murmur ran through the ranks, till, all attention, they perceived Wallace begin.

" Firſt, For your commendations " of my character, I would return " your majeſty my thanks, did I " not judge that by the ſequel of " your ſpeech you meant your en- " comiums as an *inſult*.

" You ſeem to think that I would " ſell my country's liberty for a few " light toys, which cannot make their " wearer happier. For my ſuffer- " ings in the early part of my life " I freely forgive you, and will now

" be

" be as brief as you have been in-
" ſulting.

" Firſt, For our king, in the
" name of his ſubjects, I an-
" ſwer you thus: That, much as
" they revere and love him, they
" would rather ſee him bending be-
" neath the ſtroke of death, than
" view him condeſcend to wear his
" crown as a gift of *thine*. For
" the promiſes, or rather *bribes*,
" which you have offered me, this
" is my anſwer: I have now ran
" the race of glory for theſe four-
" teen years, and ſhall I now ſell
" my country's liberty to its op-
" preſſor?

" preſſor? No, Sir, we never can
" agree on theſe terms; therefore
" note, that in two hours time the
" truce is at an end; by that time
" prepare to meet us as your *ene-*
" *mies.*"

The ſoldiers of Wallace uttered a peal of ſhouts, and preſſed forward to embrace the knees of their general.

Edward darted a revengeful look at our hero; telling him, that if fate ſhould ever caſt him in his power, no force on earth ſhould ſave him from deſtruction.

Wallace

Wallace anſwered this threat with a ſmile of contempt; the drums ſtruck up, and the leaders betook themſelves, with their followers, to their reſpective camps.

Thus ended this important conference, in which the character of Wallace ſeems to give him a right to be placed among the firſt of thoſe ſhining ornaments which Scotland has ſo plenteouſly produced; for he preferred death with glory, to a life bought at a price which every generous mind muſt, like him, have diſdained.

When

When our hero returned to his tent he caſt himſelf on his couch, to ſtrive to recover ſtrength after his morning's fatigue, and endeavoured to raiſe his ſpirits for the next day's battle. He was diſturbed, on a ſudden, by the noiſe of a ſoldier, endeavouring to prevent ſome one from entering the tent; the other as vehemently inſiſted on being admitted. Wallace, ſurpriſed at the noiſe, raiſed his head, and called to the centinel to give the perſon admittance, who ſo earneſtly deſired to be conducted to his preſence.

A lady,

A lady, attended by a warrior, entered the tent; who ran ſcreaming, and fell at the feet of Wallace, crying, "O, my father!" Our hero, aſtoniſhed at this ſtrange appearance, immediately raiſed her up. But no ſooner had he beheld her, than the colour fled from his cheeks, his hair roſe

Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

"My God, can it be my Matil-
"da's form!"

Here the warrior who had attended the lady, taking off his helmet, diſcovered the countenance of Robert Bruce. "I muſt lay my

"com-

" commands upon you both," ſaid he, " to calm this perturbation of " your minds, and I will relate " how fortune has made me ſo " happy as to enable me to diſcharge " my debt of gratitude, and to re- " ſtore your long-loſt daughter to " your arms."

" Image of my adored Matilda!" cried the enraptured parent, gazing on his reſtored daughter, " now in- " deed I wiſh to live and conquer." He then embraced Bruce, and begged he would relate the happy circumſtances of his meeting with Iſabella. Bruce gave him time to

recover from his rapture; and when he thought his ſpirits able to endure the recital, began his tale.

"Freed by your generoſity, I "ſought the camp of Edward; but "found that monarch with a dif- "ferent aſpect from that with which "I uſed to be received; for he ap- "peared to be grown gloomy, ſul- "len, and ſuſpicious; his counte- "nance was never dreſſed in ſmiles, "ſave to a chief, a countryman of "ours, whoſe name is Arran.

"I found this man had invented "means to drive all thoſe who "would

" would not enter into his infernal
" ſchemes far from the royal pre-
" ſence; myſelf particularly he
" treated with the moſt indecent
" marks of hatred and contempt.
" One day, provoked at ſomething
" I had ſaid in a diſpute with him,
" he ſtruck me; I drew my ſword,
" and would that very inſtant have
" ſacrificed the traitor to my fury,
" had not the king given orders
" to his guards to ſeize and con-
" fine me till his favourite ſhould
" eſcape. But my fiery ſpirit could
" not calmly brook an injury like
" this; ſo in the dead of night I
" fought his caſtle, which is adja-

" cent to this ſpot; it was then the
" hour of *one*, and I had made the
" reſolution to gain admittance to
" his preſence, offer him a fair
" combat; and if he refuſed me
" this honourable atonement, to
" ſacrifice him, like a coward, to
" my fury. I had not proceeded
" far on the draw-bridge, before a
" lady ſhrieked from the tower of the
" caſtle, 'My daughter is betrayed!
" monſters, hurt not the child of
" Wallace.' Rouſed at your name,
" I turned round and perceived the
" vaſſals of Arran dragging ano-
" ther lady to the caſtle. 'What,'
" cried one, 'you would have been
" off,

"off, would you? but we are as
"cunning as you, thank ye, ma-
"dam.' As theſe three men were
"armed, I thought it would be
"folly to uſe my ſword, ſo with
"my utmoſt force I came behind
"the two ſtrongeſt, and before they
"ſuſpected a ſtranger near them,
"they were hurled into the ſur-
"rounding moat. I then proferred
"my aſſiſtance to the lovely Iſa-
"bella. Her mother waved a hand-
"kerchief from the top of the
"tower, in token of thanks. I
"placed my beauteous charge un-
"der my arm, and reſolved, at the

" hazard of my life, to conduct her
" ſafe to you. I led her to the banks
" of the river Carron; and drawing
" my ſword, commanded the water-
" man, upon pain of death, to
" ferry us ſafely over to your
" camp. He performed his duty:
" your ſoldiers detained us for
" ſome time from appearing before
" you; but at length, thank Hea-
" ven, we have attained our endea-
" vours, and Fate has bleſſed me
" with the opportunity of con-
" vincing you that I can feel and
" receive a pleaſure in returning an
" obligation."

The

The tender paſſions of Wallace were now worked up to their greateſt pitch; he gazed on Bruce, then upon his daughter, and embraced them alternately. But his joy was converted into every thing but actual madneſs, when his Iſabella informed him that Matilda was ſafe and well. He would have heard the whole hiſtory of her misfortunes that very night, had he not been overpowered by Bruce, who perceived that neither the ſpirits of father or daughter were yet ſufficiently recovered to hear, with any moderation, ſo intereſting a relation.

Wallace being aſſured again and again that ſhe was ſafe and in health, conſented to remain quiet till the next morning; at the earlieſt part of which, Bruce and his fair charge appeared before him.

Scouts being ſent out to watch the motions of the enemy, and to give the alarm if any dangers ſhould threaten, Iſabella pulled out a bundle of papers from her boſom. "This," cried ſhe, "was my mother's only "amuſement, in her long captivity; "and which mentions anecdotes "of times my tender years would "not enable me to remember: aſ-

"ſiſted

"sisted by this, I shall be able to "carry on the history of our sor- "rows; for though I had never "known the joys of liberty, my "mother would paint it in such "pleasing colours, that unknowing "what it was, I sighed for it. But "why should I prattle thus?" said she, observing her father's impa- tience; in pity to which, she began the melancholy narration in the en- suing chapter.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

MATILDA'S HISTORY, MOSTLY IN HER OWN WRITING.

WHEN to my mind the cruel night of our ſeparation recurs in all its horrors, the years of miſery that have lingered on ſince that hour of woe have not ſo lulled the ſorrows of this bleeding heart, but that the tear of anguiſh will trickle, and the ſigh burſt forth, ſpite of my boaſted fortitude. O! may

may my tale of miſery never reach the eye of my adored William; nor ſhould I have committed my ſad tale to the paper which muſt be drenched with my tears, did not the fear of murder, or ſome other dreadful crime, determine me to let my protector have a chance of being relieved from the tortures his anxiety for my fate muſt give him.

Firſt, Wallace, take it as my caution, to beware of Arran; he is a villain. You remember when hurried from you——but the thought is too painful for me; the cruel recollection almoſt turns my brain——

I was

I was conducted to England, and in my journey was informed, that all our miſeries were occaſioned by my rejection of Arran: and O! conceive my tortures, upon hearing that I was deſtined to be the monſter's wife; that, as a reward for having ſold his ſoul, his country, and his king, I was to be a ſacrifice. Brought before the Engliſh monarch, I was treated by him like a ſlave; ordered to tear your image from my mind, and prepare myſelf to be conducted to the ſacred altar; there to hear my marriage with you, my beſt-beloved, declared as null and criminal. I treated his propoſal

propoſal with diſdain; told him I would rather prepare myſelf for the rack, or any other tortures that his cruelty could inflict. Pain, I told him, I could bear, and that the flames of hell were far leſs horrible to me than the ſight of Arran. "Well," cried Edward, with a malicious ſmile of triumph, "your "huſband, father, child, are all "within my graſp; conſent this "inſtant to the match propoſed, "or when I wave my hand, that "inſtant one of them ſhall fall the "ſacrifice of your obſtinacy."

I then

I then conſidered this only as a threat of the tyrant's, which he could not think of putting in execution; I ſpurned at his offers, and, with a firm and undaunted ſpirit, ſaw the ſignal given; but what could equal the anguiſh of my ſoul, when I beheld the cruel menaces had been put into execution, and the ſavage miniſters of death produced the gaſping head of my murdered father. Shrieking at the horrid ſight, I was conducted out of court; and when my ſcattered ſenſes were recovered, found myſelf in an old Gothic chamber, magnificently fur-

niſhed; but there was a gloomineſs about it, that made it appear like the throne of horror, eſpecially when the chief dæmon of the place appeared; for Arran came, like Lucifer, with an infernal ſmile; like him he ſeemed to triumph over the wretches he had betrayed. "Well, "Madam, is your ſcorn at laſt re-"moved?" cried he, "or muſt "*another* ſacrifice glut my re-"venge?" I ſat ſullenly with a lowering brow. "Frown on," ſaid he; "had you been leſs liberal of your "haughtineſs, we might, perhaps, "have both been happier; but you "have had your days of exulta-

"tion,

" tion, and now my hour of tri-
" umph is arrived."—" You are ſo
" degraded from the name of man,"
returned I, " that to maintain a
" converſation with you, adds in-
" famy to thy fellow-creatures who
" condeſcend ſo low as to hold diſ-
" courſe with ſuch a *wretch*."
" Well, well," cried Arran, " I do
" not mean to tire you with my
" converſation; I am not come to
" ſigh and whine to you; thoſe
" days of folly are over; but hear
" my fixed reſolve: If in the ſpace
" of three revolving weeks you do
" not willingly attend me to the al-
" tar, the little infant, who at this
" inſtant

"inſtant ſits ſmiling by you, ſhall "grin, like your ungrateful father, "in the pangs of death." He then left me, bereft of reaſon, to the care of two ancient domeſtics. It now ſeems wonderful to me how I contrived to ſupport the cruel conflict; death would have been a pleaſure to me, had not my infant Iſabella ſeemed to ſmile and rear her little hands, imploring life. Her pleadings were too ſtrong to be reſiſted, and I reſolved rather to yield myſelf to Arran's cruelty, than be the murderer of my cherub. The three weeks danced away like the flaſh which vaniſhes before one has time to ſay

it lightens. The tyrant appeared ſuperbly habited. "Come, Ma-
"dam," ſaid he, "are you re-
"ſolved, or do you wiſh to ſee the
"fate of your infant?" At that in-
ſtant a ruffian entered with a knife, whoſe blade was grown ruſty with gore; the fatal inſtrument that had deſtroyed my father's life. At that inſtant all my courage failed. "Help me, mo-
"ther," blurted out the little infant; and thy features, my beloved Wallace, appeared ſo ſtrongly in her little countenance, that I threw myſelf in an agony at his feet. "Hear me, Sir," I ſhrieked

out; "O! ſpare my infant, and I "will be any thing; your ſervant, "your ſlave, nay even your *wife*." Arran waved *his* hand, took me by *mine*, and the executioner being ordered to retire, I was led to a ſpacious hall, where ſtood a holy friar ready to perform his office.

Firſt, he abſolved me from my marriage with you—Fooliſh man!—though Fate has made me wretched, loſt beyond deſcription, yet our bonds are too ſacred for even death himſelf to break. Polluted by the embraces of a ſavage, I truſt you yet will drop a ſympathiſing tear

over the recital of my woes, and own my virtue even in my *infamy*. Four long, long years was I the ſlave of this deteſted monſter's brutal paſſion. The little Iſabella, now verging upon her ſixth ſummer, would by her inceſſant prattle diſſipate the load of melancholy that preyed upon my heart:—"Yes, "my innocent," would I cry, "I "live but to find an opportunity "of conveying thee to thy heroic "father." Animated with this hope, I contrived to keep in life; but I fear I ſhould not have been able to accompliſh this, had not my tyrant's paſſion quite abated, and he

he began to treat me with a brutal neglect, which was infinitely preferable to his odious careſſes. Indeed three years paſſed on without my ever ſeeing him, except now and then upon the ramparts; and even there, we mutually endeavoured to avoid each other; but guilt, which always is accompanied with fear, prevented him from diſmiſſing me his caſtle.

By chance, as he was aſleep upon the terrace one evening, I heard a wandering Savoyard ſinging below; his theme was your gallant conduct in the French wars, your

eſcape to Scotland, and your great deſigns. When Arran awoke and liſtened to his ſtrains, he ordered him to be ſeized, dragged to his caſtle, and there deprived of his tongue and hands.

Edward ſoon after called on him to fight his cauſe againſt your army. The night before his departure, Arran entered my chamber, ſearched every drawer and cranny for my papers; but I always had circumſpection enough to hide them in my handkerchief. With many threats and imprecations he commanded his ſervants to deny me the materials for

for writing while he was abſent, and for three years this melancholy narration was impeded. At length, ſearching my cloaths, I found a box of jewels, which in my grief I had overlooked; with this I bribed the mildeſt of my attendants, and was reſtored the privilege of writing. I continued my melancholy tale at thoſe periods when unemployed in cultivating the mind of my amiable daughter: her faculties were pleaſed with, and open to learning; and in the fifteenth year of her age the girl began to expand into a beautiful woman. Knowing your ſafety, my paſſions grew calmer and calmer;

and no longer burſting forth violently, were ſettled into a deep melancholy; though grief ſtill devours my heart, and I am confident muſt ſoon deſtroy me. Upon the death of one of my women, another female was appointed me; ſhe had heard of my misfortunes, and her tender heart had always bled for them; ſhe wiſhed to conſole me, and, to effect her ſchemes, put on before my keepers an air of grave auſterity, and ſoon was fixed upon by them as the moſt proper inſtrument of exerciſing the rod of cruelty over me; for all the ſervants perceiving their maſter uſe me with ſuch unmanly barbarity,

ſought

ſought to obtain his favour by the ſervile imitation. The amiable Gertrude was the very reverſe of theſe wretches; ſhe ſoothed my melancholy with the moſt tender conſolation. At length ſhe brought me the joyful tidings of your having landed your army upon the banks of the Carron, and would have flown to you directly with the news of my fate, but my perſecutor arrived with the Engliſh army, great part of whom king Edward ordered to be quartered in his caſtle; and diſcovering my friend's intentions, ordered her to be plunged deep in a gloomy dungeon, from which he ſwears ſhe never

never ſhall depart. Searching the wall ſome weeks ago, we diſcovered a grate, through whoſe bars a human body might poſſibly creep. But O, how keen was my anguiſh! when I found that, waſted as I was, it was impoſſible for me to avoid my tyrant that way. Your daughter this night means to make the attempt; ſhe is now in her ſeventeenth year. O! may the God of virtue guide her to you, and ſhield you from thoſe misfortunes which have attend *your*, ſtill let me call you ſo, unfortunate

MATILDA.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

HERE the mind of Wallace, which had at different times manifeſted itſelf by his features, grew too powerful for his frame. "Suf-
"fering angel," exclaimed he, "thy
"ſorrows ſoon ſhall have an end;
"and Arran—death and eternal
"furies ſeize the deceitful, luſtful
"monſter. But proceed, my child,
"let me hear how you eſcaped."

"My gallant deliverer," reſumed Iſabella, "has informed you of the
"greateſt

" greateſt part of that adventure. " With difficulty I crept through " the bar; firſt having by my maps " diſcovered the ſituation of your " camp. The ſervants of our op- " preſſor detected me in the attempt; " the bravery of this young ſoldier " has preſerved us; my trembling " heart acknowledged you as my " parent; and we all may be " happy."

Wallace ſtarted up, and having ordered his men to be ranged before him, ſingled out a hundred of the braveſt of them. Douglas and Bruce accompanied him; who, though

though enliſted in the Engliſh army, yet conſented to oppoſe a wretch whom he ſtiled a ſcandal to creation.

They ſoon arrived at the caſtle, which Edward, after having depoſed the rightful lord, had preſented to Arran.

Wallace ordered his men to conceal themſelves under the jutty mountains which ſurrounded the caſtle; but at the ſignal of a horn, that he always carried about him, to ruſh to the walls and enter it by force.

Theſe

Theſe precautions were taken leaſt Arran ſhould perceive his approaching fate, and out of deſperation commit ſome fatal action on his beloved Matilda.

Douglas, Bruce, and Wallace entered, and perceived Arran in a gloomy poſture, with his eyes fixed to the ground, ſtriding along the hall. He no ſooner beheld his unwelcome gueſts, than flying to their arms, he told them he long had expected the happineſs of beholding Wallace there, and that he had juſt made a reſolution of bringing his men over to him that very evening.

Wallace

Wallace trembling for the welfare of his Matilda, followed the deceiver into an adjoining room, which he had no ſooner entered than he ſaw Arran ſtamp upon the ground, and a confuſed murmur of men, ruſhing up a flight of ſtairs, was immediately heard.

Our hero directly ſounded his horn, and perceived his aſſociates burſting the gates (which had been purpoſely cloſed) juſt as the partizans of Arran appeared.

"Then," cried the exulting traitor, "vengeance at length is "mine.

" mine. Now, rebel, thou ſhalt pay
" the forfeit of thine enmity to me
" and Edward."

" We are caught, indeed," anſwered Wallace, " but ſhall not pe-
" riſh unatoned."

" No!" cried Arran with a ſneer.

" Behold our avengers," exclaimed Wallace as the Highlanders crowded the room. The ſoldiers of Arran inſtantly dropped their arms, and their maſter ſtood quaking, the victim of terror and aſtoniſhment.

" Now,

"Now, Sir, you are my priſoner," reſumed our hero, "and if you "hope to live another moment, in- "ſtantly produce my wife."

"I obey," ſaid the gloomy villain, ſkulking to a ſtair-caſe oppoſite them.

Bruce, the moment he was out of ſight, begged he might not be truſted alone with her.

"No," cried the gallant Douglas, "I will make him ſure." He followed him up the ſtairs, and plunged his dagger to the monſter's heart,

crying, " Thus periſh all deſerters." Arran tottered, fell, and his laſt words breathed curſes upon Wallace, Matilda, and his Creator.

Every countenance wore a ſmile at the end of this man, whoſe life had been an unvaried ſcene of treachery and barbarity; and in commemoration of this event, many of the Scotch nobility wear in their arms to this day a bloody dagger, with the inſcription of

I WILL MAKE HIM SURE.

Wallace immediately called for the ſteward of the caſtle, and ſnatch-

ing his keys, began a ſearch for his wife through every apartment: at laſt he opened the tower where this child of ſorrow was confined. She was leaning on a table, but at the ſight of Wallace ſhe reeled backwards, and fell into the arms of her tranſported huſband, who ran to receive her.

But at the ſight of her the blood at his heart ran cold. The beautiful Matilda, by the ravages of time and grief, appeared many years older than her real age; her face had been lengthened by affliction; the

lillies alone maintained their ſituation on her *ſtill* delicate cheek.

Tortured with ſuſpenſe, the unhappy huſband bore her to his ſoldiers, who ſoon removed her from this caſtle to the tent of Wallace, who reſigned her to the care of Iſabella, while he indulged his melancholy meditations in a gloomy walk.

A ſort of awful boding ſeized his ſoul; a dove dropped dying by him, and her mate bemoaning her, was in an inſtant ſwallowed by an eagle. "Then I fear my prophecies are

"true,"

"true," ſaid he, burſting into tears, "I muſt bemoan my ador-
"able wife, and to the royal Ed-
"ward yield my dear-gained glo-
"ries. Yes, I have ſtruggled hard
"for liberty, and Fate, I hope, will
"pay me for my toils; one blow
"and then ——"

Here as he approached his tent a piercing ſcream iſſued from it; he ſtood transfixed with horror, till Iſabella ruſhing forth, informed him, ſobbing, that her mother was no more; unable to ſupport the brutality of Arran, ſhe had that very morning ſwallowed poiſon. She had lived but

a few minutes after Wallace left the tent, and had juſt ſtrength enough to murmur forth the ſad tale.

Wallace would, moſt probably, have immediately bent beneath this cruel load, had not the news of the Engliſh army approaching his tents rouſed him from his ſtupefaction. "Here I may ſeek death and find "it," cried he; "Fate will ſoon "drop her dark curtain over the ſad "ſcene of my life, and unite me to "thoſe whom my ſoul holds moſt "dear." Bruce ſoon after appeared, and addreſſed him thus: "Our "friendſhip I hope will never end

"but

" but with our lives." He then proceeded to inform him of a mutual attachment that ſubſiſted betwixt him and Iſabella, and implored his conſent to their union. After ſo ſad an occaſion, he intreated pardon for introducing the ſubject of love, " but " a ſoldier's life," continued he, " is " always uncertain."

" Bruce," anſwered the hero of our tale (bearing up againſt his miſfortunes with a manly fortitude), " I perceive my end is drawing " near: Iſabella has virtues enough " to make any man happy; but I " never can conſent to her joining

" in ſo ſacred a tie as that of wed-
" lock with the enemy of her coun-
" try; renounce your principles,
" and perform as many brave deeds
" in the *defence* of your native land
" as you have been miſled to act
" *againſt* it, then I ſhall be proud
" to own you." " What, betray
" my truſt!" anſwered Bruce. " I
" wiſh you to forfeit no confidence,"
cried Wallace; " write to the Eng-
" liſh monarch; bid him appoint
" another officer; tell him you have
" been engaged in a bad cauſe too
" long; that you are now deter-
" mined to be yourſelf again."
Bruce, convinced how much nobler
ſuch

ſuch a conduct would be, penned a letter to Edward, reſtored his preſents, and informed him of his intentions. Wallace gave him Iſabella as a reward for his magnanimity.

The nuptial ceremony was ſoon after performed; and the Engliſh appearing, the chiefs were ſummoned to their ranks.

But the mind of Wallace, depreſſed by affliction, and debilitated by the various paſſions which had ſo lately been ſtruggling in his boſom, was no longer able to inſpire his ſoldiers with that fiery ardour,

inflamed

inflamed with which, they had ſo often conquered.

The ſoldiers ſoon caught the melancholy of their leader, and were ſhortly routed by the Engliſh forces.

Douglas, here fearing that the purſuit after his friend would be extremely warm, and make it impoſſible for him to eſcape, he therefore invented this generous artifice, that he might effect it: falling on the ground, he exclaimed, "Thus "periſh all the hopes of Wallace." The generals and captains who were in purſuit of the real, now ſeized

ſeized the fictitious hero, and bore him away, with his faithful Maria, who never quitted his ſide.

Wallace calmly retreated, heedleſs of danger, and eſcaped, with a few of his unfortunate comrades, to the woods, where they led a wild and uncultivated life; living on the prey he or his companions had the fortune to kill.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

NOTHING but his reſpect for his God could have prevented him from terminating his own exiſtence; but having lived like a hero, he ſcorned to die like an animal.

Edward ſoon ſent a detachment to ſeize on all the ſtraggling Scotch, who, like Wallace, dragged a rough uncultivated life among the mountains.

The

The ſtorm of our hero's grief being a little abated, he again began to conſider the welfare of his countrymen; and before his ſorrows broke his heart, he reſolved to ſeek out for them a refuge for their ſhelter, when invaded by the iron rod of adverſity.

Wallace had often heard the departed Montieth mention a relation of his; but with a diffidence for which our hero was at a loſs to account. His own conſcience, however, was too pure for him to make any conſtructions to the diſadvantage of another.

Though

Though entirely careleſs of his own life, he thought himſelf bound to uſe every precaution for the preſervation of his fellow-ſoldiers.

He ſummoned them, therefore, together; his heart ſmote him when they appeared before him: A powerful army, compoſed of youths glowing in health, ſtrength, and conſcious integrity, was now reduced into a very few ſtragglers, in whoſe countenance were depicted all the horrors of want and deſperation.

"Such," cried Wallace to himſelf, "is life; and who can deſire it?

"My

" My fortitude can ſcarcely ſupport
" it—But have I not one great ob-
" ject; *the good of my country?*
" Yes; and as I have lived in that
" purſuit without being contami-
" nated by the breath of ſlander, let
" me cheriſh the hope of being
" tranſplanted into that garden of
" felicity, where, reunited to Ma-
" tilda, the flower of fond affection
" can never be impeded by the chill
" of worldly malice."

With theſe ſentiments he acquired courage to addreſs his deſponding ranks, and charging them yet to diſpute

diſpute for liberty (though with an aching heart), dreſſed his countenance in ſmiles, and led them by difficult and laborious marches to the habitation of Sir John Montieth.

Sir John received them with apparent rapture, but the warmth of his addreſſes appeared too violent for the ſlight knowledge he had of any perſon in the party.

Our hero reſolved therefore not to truſt him with the *important* ſecret of his being entruſted with the life of Wallace; but rather to wait till

till time ſhould more fully diſcover the character of his hoſt.

The diſpoſition of Sir John Montieth juſtified this caution; he was a diſtant relation to the late laird Murraivan, and had contracted an early acquaintance with the treacherous Donald; ſo greatly had this intimacy increaſed, that Sir John had been informed of the ſchemes which had been laid to preclude the rightful ſon of Murraivan from enjoying the eſtates of his anceſtors.

The crafty knight, who began to entertain hopes of ſucceeding his friend, uſed all his influence to per-

ſuade him to finiſh the work he had ſo fortunately undertaken, and make away with young Montieth by ſome violent method.

But Donald (whoſe conſcience told him his hands were already ſtained too deeply in blood) poſitively inſiſted againſt the murder of the young peaſant, which he declared was uſeleſs; as Fate had thrown a veil over the fortunes of his relation, which it was impoſſible he ever could be able to tear aſunder.

Compelled by theſe arguments, Sir John was ſilenced, and left the country;

country; hoping that the mind of Donald would be altered by ſome lucky circumſtance.

But returning home, his grief and mortification were exceſſive, upon finding the hitherto obſcure youth placed, by the confeſſion of the expiring Donald, in full poſſeſſion of all the honours and eſtates of MURRAIVAN. In diſguſt he therefore entered into a *ſecret* league with Edward, to betray as many priſoners into his royal hands as might be ſeized within the compaſs of his tower.

Sir John, though ignorant of the titles of the illuſtrious gueſts he en-

tertained in his caſtle, yet perceived ſomething in moſt of their manners which diſtinguiſhed them from the vulgar herd. The rewards offered for captives by Edward were very great; he wrote to the Engliſh king, therefore, requeſting him to ſend a guard, that the priſoners might be ſecured.

Our hero and his few remaining friends were ſitting by their treacherous hoſt at a banquet, when on a ſudden the vaults beneath the caſtle echoed with ſhouts; the common men of Wallace ruſhed into the hall, ſome wounded, and many dying, before they could reach their commander;

mander; crying, "We are betray-
"ed; Sir John has betrayed us; the
"Engliſh are in the caſtle."

A ſmile of exulting villany had juſt flufhed the cheek of Sir John Montieth, when he received his death-wound from the broad-ſword of one of Wallace's officers.

The ſoldiers of Wallace fought hard for their liberties; but the ſuperior numbers of the Engliſh, who ruſhed down like a torrent on every ſide of them, ſoon cut moſt of them to pieces. When our hero ſaw every effort prove in vain to reſcue

himſelf from the inſults of his enemies, he wrapped himſelf up in the cloak of a common ſoldier; reſolving, though he periſhed, that the Engliſh, deceived by his diſguiſe, might ſtill live in fear of him who had ſo often made them tremble; and he exulted in the idea of their never attaining the knowledge of how they had triumphed over Wallace.

Our hero was conducted, amongſt a crowd of vulgar priſoners, to the hall where Edward ſat in judgment over his ſubdued countrymen. The features of Wallace were ſo diſfigured

gured by the ravages of grief, that even his own men were unable to recollect him, and miſtook him, as he ſtood in the mantle of a humble private, for ſome one of their unfortunate companions. As they entered the hall, Edward was beheld by every one addreſſing himſelf to young Douglas, who ſtood before him with an air of intrepidity, which told the exulting monarch that although the heavy fetters might gall his *body*, his *ſpirit* ſoared *above* the reach of tyranny.

" You have been inſtrumental," exclaimed the incenſed king, " in

" the eſcape of a traitor; his puniſh-
" ment, therefore, becomes your
" own."

Douglas ſmiled, and the guards were advancing to lead him to his fate, when a motion from the hand of the ſovereign arreſted their purpoſe.

" Stay," cried he, " mercy ſhall
" yet, if poſſible, attend my vic-
" tories. If *you* or *any* man will
" yield the daring traitor Wallace
" to my power, you all ſhall live
" free, ſafe, and umoleſted; but if
" you refuſe compliance, your death
" ſhall

" ſhall only be the prologue to a " tale of ſlaughter, which, when " recorded on your Scottiſh annals, " poſterity ſhall ſhudder as they " read."

" Tyrant!" cried Douglas; " and " may the curſe of Heaven firſt " light upon that wretch who could " ſo far renounce every dictate of " gratitude, as to deſert his ſuffer- " ing general."

Edward ſtamped, and the life of Douglas hung on the words he next ſhould pronounce, when the eyes of all were turned towards a com-

mon

mon ſoldier; who ſtepping forward, offered to betray the life of Wallace into the hands of the Engliſh, provided the king would bind himſelf to keep his promiſes.

Edward's eyes were lighted up with tranſport; he ſwore ſolemnly to fulfil the conceſſions he had propoſed.

The captives diſdaining a life purchaſed with ignominy, loaded the treacherous ſoldier with execrations; but pity gave way to ſurpriſe, when, throwing away his cloak, the ſuppoſed villain diſcovered

vered their beloved, their adored Wallace, habited exactly as on the morn when he converſed with Edward upon the banks of the Carron.

"No," exclaimed the hero, "ſuch friendſhip never ſhall fall the "victim to its own generoſity; be- "hold me here, ready to die as I "have lived, the champion of my "country."

The generous Bruce interceded without ſucceſs, that he might ſuffer for his gallant friend. Edward's hatred once excited, ſtood like a frowning rock, which the ſighs of com-

compaſſion, and the laſhing billows of rage, attempt equally to move in vain.

Engliſh, Scotch, all ſhed tears, ſent long petitions, put up prayers, and conſtantly joined in ſupplications for the life of the unfortunate priſoner; but Edward's anger was implacable. "You have "braved my fury," ſaid the incenſed king; "you might have removed "the cloud whilſt it was lowering, "now it muſt burſt over you. At- "tend, and tremble; we give you "three days preparation; a greater "kindneſs than your villany de- "ſerves;

" ſerves; on the fourth, the fatal
" ax muſt ſever that preſumptuous
" head from its trunk for ever."

Wallace, aſtoniſhed at this ſudden ſentence, pleaded his right to a fair and honourable trial; but all reſiſtance was in vain; he was plunged into a dreary cell, and his arms and legs were faſt confined by links of iron.

At this time Bruce, his ſon-in-law, had contrived, by one of the centinels, to convey a letter to Wallace through the bars of his priſon; informing him of his having collected

lected a few forces, which he was leading to his reſcue; but this came too late, nothing could ſave him..

The noble Robert afterwards proved as great and as unfortunate a hero as his father-in-law: his fame can never be forgot by his countrymen, while their annals record the memorable battle of Bannock Burne.

On the fatal day which was to finiſh the career of Wallace, a great concourſe of people aſſembled to behold the end of a man whoſe fate they could not help thinking ſevere.

He walked to the ſcaffold with a calm dignity of the noble mind which, after having ran through all the painful viciſſitudes of life, is taught by experience to look upon death as a .

Conſummation devoutly to be wiſh'd for.

Conſcious that his countrymen were now freed from the terrors of the ſame fate, he laid his head to the ſtroke with a compoſure that aſtoniſhed his friends, and made him expire in the midſt of weeping enemies.

Such was the fate of this brave man, who ſo long oppoſed tyranny, and

and kept his country free from the cruel ſtroke of oppreſſion.

Edward here ſtained all his former glories; for he ſhould have conſidered, that mercy and compaſſion for unfortunate merit are the true inſignia of

A BRITISH HEART.

FINIS.

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